

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 BIB-01

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R 171705Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5376

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 7493

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IT, PO, XZ

SUBJECT: SOARES' RELATIONS WITH EUROPEAN COMMUNIST AND
SOCIALIST PARTIES

REF: ROME 18381

1. APPRECIATE REFTTEL WHICH PROVIDES USEFUL INSIGHT INTO
SOARES'S VISIT.

2. ANSWER TO QUESTION POSED PARA 9 (I.E. WHY SOARES MAINTAINS
SUCH CLOSE RAPPORT WITH SPANISH AND ITALIAN COMMUNIST
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PARTIES THUS COMPLICATING LIFE OF HIS SOCIALIST COUNTERPARTS)

LIES IN PORTUGUESE DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION. ELECTIONS ARE COMING UP AND SOARES HOPES TO CUT DOWN PCP PERCENTAGE FROM 13 PERCENT TO AROUND 4 5 PERCENT. HE PLANS TO DO THIS BY RIDING GROUND SWELL OF POPULAR REVULSION TOWARD PCP HARDLINE TACTICS. AT SAME TIME HE MUST WORRY ABOUT LEFTWING OF HIS OWN PARTY AND CHARGES THAT HE IS BLINDLY ANTI-COMMUNIST, A CHARGE WHICH HE HAS CONSISTENTLY DENIED AND WHICH COULD HURT HIM IN IMPORTANT MILITARY CIRCLES.

3. SOARES INTENDS TO USE HIS RELATIONSHIPS WITH PCI AND PCE TO HIGHLIGHT CUNHAL'S INTRANSIGENCE, WHILE DEMONSTRATING AT THE SAME TIME THAT HE HAS NOT WRITTEN OFF THE 700,000 PORTUGUESE WHO VOTED FOR THE PCP LAST APRIL. CONSISTENT WITH THIS APPROACH, SOARES TOLD ME CONFIDENTIALLY PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE THAT HIS CALL FOR A MEETING OF LATIN EUROPEAN COMMUNIST AND SOCIALIST PARTIES WAS PRINCIPALLY A MEANS OF KEEPING CUNHAL ON THE DEFENSIVE.

4. FROM HIS PRE-1974 EXILE DAYS, SOARES ALSO HAS GOOD PERSONAL RAPPORT WITH BERLINGUER AND SANTIAGO CARRILLO AND TALKS ABOUT THEM FREQUENTLY IN PRIVATE. HE ALSO FEELS THAT BERLINGUER SUPPORTED HIM AGAINST THE PCP WHEN SOCIALISTS HAD THEIR BACK TO THE WALL LAST SPRING.

5. ALTHOUGH SOARES AND HIS PARTY ARE NOW RIDING HIGH AS A RESULT OF THE ABORTIVE LEFTIST COUP OF NOVEMBER 25, HE KNOWS THAT CUNHAL AND THE PCP STILL REPRESENT A SERIOUS THREAT TO MULTI-PARTY DEMOCRACY IN PORTUGAL. WORSENING ECONOMIC SITUATION MAY GIVE COMMUNISTS A SECOND CHANCE AT BAT. THAT BEING THE CASE, SOARES'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS OTHER CP'S WILL CONTINUE TO BE FUNDAMENTALLY CONDITIONED BY INTERNAL POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS DESPITE WHATEVER EXTERNAL PRESSURES WE MAY BE ABLE TO BRING TO BEAR ON HIM. THIS DOES NOT MEAN WE AND THE WESTERN EUROPEANS SHOULDN'T TRY TO BROADEN HIS HORIZONS, BUT IT DOES MEAN WE SHOULDN'T EXPECT EASY RESULTS.

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